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Approved For Release 2002/01/29 : CIA-RDP78-04723A000100150040-6

**MEMORANDUM FOR: Information Processing Coordinators**

**SUBJECT : Draft of NBS Instructions on Application of the  
Federal Standard ASCII Code**

1. A copy of the subject NBS draft instruction is attached for your review and comment. You should carefully consider its acceptability for your future ADP activities.

2. The Federal Standard ASCII code is a 7-bit code with 128 assigned characters. Proposed future standards will extend this to 8-bits and 256 possible characters. It is compatible with proposed international standards but differs from the 8-bit extended binary-coded-decimal interchange code (EBCDIC) used in the IBM 360, RCA Spectra 70 and compatible third generation computers. It is this difference which will require manufacturers to alter coding in future equipment, and users to make a gradual transition.

3. The significance of this standard is its long range benefits in ADP compatibility, including both data communications and data processing. Although the effective date for the standard is 1 July 1969, this is only the date on which a gradual and evolutionary transition is to commence. The provisions for transition seem practical and reasonable and do not require any drastic action or interruption of operations. Waivers are provided for unusual circumstances. The standard does not appear to create unique problems for the Agency but will require a gradual, long term, future transition with eventual conversion of some files and software.

4. It is proposed that the Agency reply to NBS recommend acceptance and publication of the subject instruction as drafted. If there are any special problems, exceptions, or other recommendations, it is

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very important that they be registered at this time. It is requested that you give serious consideration to the applicability of this instruction in your ADP operations and provide your comments by 25 September 1968.

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Chief, Information Processing Staff  
Office of Planning, Programming, and Budgeting

Attach: As stated

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